REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 14 and 21 are amended for the Examiner's consideration. The above amendments are fully supported by the specification and, in particular, Fig. 6. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Present Amendment is proper for entry

Applicants respectfully submit that the instant amendment is proper for entry after final rejection. Applicants note that no question of new matter is presented nor are any new issues raised in entering the instant amendment of the claims and that no new search would be required. Moreover, Applicants submit that the instant amendment places the application in condition for allowance, or at least in better form for appeal. Accordingly, Applicants request the Examiner to enter the instant amendment, consider the merits of the same, and indicate the allowability of the present application and each of the pending claims. Applicants note, in particular, that claims 14 and 21 has been amended in an effort to resolve the Section 112, 2nd paragraph, rejection.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 20 is allowed and that claims 19 and 21 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if presented in

independent form. As Applicants have traversed the reception of claim 19 and amended claim 21 to resolve the formal rejection, Applicants respectfully request that at least claims 19 and 21 be indicated to be allowed and/or allowable. Moreover, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

Claim Objection

Claim 14 was objected to because it recites a minor informality. This rejection is believed to be moot.

Specifically, claim 14 is amended consistent with the Examiner's suggestions, i.e., to delete the second "a" on line 2 of claim 14.

Applicants respectfully request that the objection of claim 14 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claims 19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. This rejection is traversed and/or believed to be moot.

With regard to claim 19, Applicants submit that the noted feature is not indefinite or unclear. Fig. 6 of the instant application clearly shows a front valve holder 35A that includes a connecting portion 35Ac which extends into a recess of the rear valve holder 35B. The recess is the reduced diameter portion of the rear valve holder 35B. Fig. 6 clearly shows a gap between the reduced diameter portion of rear valve holder 35B and valve cylinder 10. Fig. 6 also clearly shows that portion

35Ac extends into this recess. Furthermore, since the valve holder 35A has been defined as a "front" valve holder and since the valve holder 35B has been defined as a "rear" valve holder, Applicants have clearly established forward and rearward directions. Thus, Fig. 6 clearly shows that the recess which receives portion 35Ac has a forward facing open end. Indeed, it is apparent from Fig. 6 that this forward open end of the recess allows the portion 35Ac to enter into the recess.

With regard to claim 21, Applicants submit that this claim has been amended consistent with the Examiner's comments. Each of the features recited in claim 21 are also fully supported in Fig. 6 and one having ordinary skill in the art would have no difficulty understanding the recited features.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 19 and 21 be withdrawn.

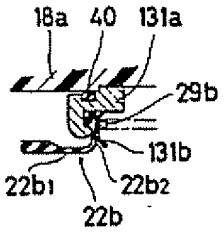
35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,190,125 to SUZUKI et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the rejection, the Examiner asserts that Figure 4 of SUZUKI shows pertinent features related to the claimed invention. For example, the Examiner is of the opinion that Figure 4 of SUZUKI shows that the attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder and engaging an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that this feature is not

disclosed in Figure 4 of SUZUKI, reproduced below.

Fig. 4



Claim 1 recites that the pair of valve holders, which the Examiner has identified as members 131a and 131b, engage an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder. This is not disclosed in Fig. 4 of SUZUKI. To the contrary, while it is true that Fig. 4 shows two members 131a and 131b, it is clear from Fig. 4 that only member 131a engages an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder 18a. Member 131b simply does not engage an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder 18a. As such, it cannot properly be argued that Fig. 4 of SUZUKI discloses or suggests that the attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder and engaging an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder.

The Examiner asserts on page 6 of the Final Office Action that "[t]he claim language does not require that each holder engage the inner face." This assertion is not correct and is contrary to the express language of the claims. Claim 1 clearly states that the pair of valve holders is attached to the valve cylinder and engages an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder. This is clearly shown in Fig. 6 which clearly illustrates that portions of both valve holders 35A and 35B engage with the

inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder 10. Claim 1 simply cannot properly be read to recite that only one of the members 35A and 35B engages an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder because claim 1 uses the term "pair". As the Examiner knows, the term "pair" means two, and not one. Thus, the Examiner's argument that this language can be read to recite that only one of the valve holders engages with the valve cylinder is improper and contrary to clear language of the claims.

Furthermore, as shown in Fig. 4, a circular groove is formed on the outer circumference of the first retainer 131a and an O-ring 40 is installed on the circular groove provided in the first retainer 131a. The first retainer 131a is secured in an air-tight manner to the cylindrical portion 18a of the piston body 18 through the O-ring 40 by pressing. Also, Fig. 4 shows a circular ring 131b, provided as a second retainer, secured to the inner circumference of the tubular portion of the first retainer 131a by pressing. However, the first retainer 131a does not include a protruding part, as recited in the claimed invention, nor does the circular ring 131b include a recessed portion, as recited in the claimed invention.

By way of background, Fig. 6 of the instant application shows an annular recess portion 50 arranged on an outer cylindrical circumferential surface of member 35B and an annular protruding portion 51 arranged on an inner circumferential cylindrical surface of connecting portion 35Ac of member 35A. The connecting portion 35Ac extends into an annular recess of the member 35B which has an open forward end.

Applicants emphasize that claim 1 clearly recites, for example, that the attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder and engaging an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder. Fig. 4 of SUZUKI, in contrast, provides no engagement between member 131b the valve cylinder 18a, and instead provides engagement between member 131b and an inner circumferential surface of member 131a. Accordingly, the Examiner must acknowledge that Fig. 4 of SUZUKI fails to disclose, or even suggest, an arrangement wherein a pair of valve holders engages with an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder.

Additionally, Applicants submit that the configuration of SUZUKI is, by far, more difficult to manufacture and assemble than that of the claimed invention. For example, the recess and protruding portion of the claimed invention allow an easy and simple "snap-like" fit mating, which is elastically engaged. The configuration of the claimed invention also uses less material, which reduces costs. Additionally, the mating of the claimed invention is very secure, used in combination with the remaining features of the claimed invention. In contrast, the configuration of SUZUKI includes more material and would thus be more costly to manufacture. Also, this configuration clearly shows that both of the rings 131a and 131b have smooth surfaces which cannot be equated with nor is it similar to that of the claimed protruding and recess mating portions of the claimed invention.

Thus, in contrast to SUZUKI, in the claimed invention, the booster includes a valve body which has an annular attaching bead portion 34b airtightly attached to

the valve cylinder and an expansion cylinder portion 34c extending in the axial direction from the attaching bead portion. An annular valve portion communicates with a forward end portion of the expansion cylinder portion and is opposed to the vacuum pressure introducing valve seat and the atmosphere introducing valve seat so as to seat thereon. The attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions 35Ab and 35Bb formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder. A cylindrical connecting portion 35Ac of the front holder is engaged with an outer circumference of an engaging portion 35Bc of a rear valve holder of the pair of valve holders. An annular recess portion 50 and an annular protruding portion 51 of the pair of cylindrical holding portions are arranged on circumferential surfaces and are elastically engaged with each other. A front valve holder 35A including a connecting portion 35Ac extends into a recess of the rear valve holder 35B having a forward facing open end, whereby the connecting portion 35Ac is positioned between the valve cylinder 10 and an engaging portion 35Bb of the rear valve holder 35B. These features are not shown in the reference applied by the Examiner.

Applicants also submit that the Examiner does not appear to specifically consider dependent claims 13-18, as it relates to SUZUKI. In any event, Applicants submit that the features of claims 13-18 are also distinguishable over, for example, SUZUKI. In particular, SUZUKI contains no suggestion or showing of a recess portion and protruding portion being providing on the engaging faces of the components (claims 5 and 17). Instead, again, SUZUKI shows a different

configuration. In such a configuration, one component engages a mating component, resulting in two surfaces of each component mating with two surfaces of the mating component.

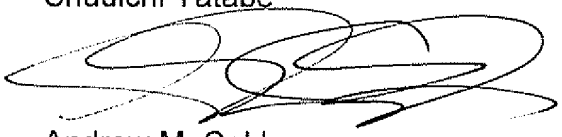
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required.

Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
Shuuichi Yatabe



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